



COMMUNITY ACTION TREKS

# Kingdom of Mustang Trek

Trek to the once forbidden kingdom of Mustang and explore a region rich in Tibetan culture.

NEPAL







**GRADE**  
MODERATE

**MAX ALTITUDE**  
4000m

**TREKKING DAYS**  
13

**TRIP LENGTH**  
20 days

**MIN PEOPLE**  
4

# Kingdom of Mustang Trek

The Kingdom of Mustang was founded in the 15th century by King Ame Pal, carved out from territory ruled by local warlords, and was strategically located to dominate the local trade routes.

Mustang has attracted adventurers for many years, rightly so as it is remote, high, dry and beautiful, however it was sealed off from foreign trekkers until 1992. It is part of the Tibetan plateau and located to the north of the mountain giants of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna. It is rich in Tibetan culture and has the only walled city in the Himalaya.

A visit to Mustang is unique as we step back in time into 15th century monasteries and seeing a landscape untouched by man yet beautifully carved out by the elements. It is so different from other trekking areas with fertile valleys nestling in a desert-like landscape with lunar-type mountains all around. It can probably best be described as a giant Grand Canyon surrounded by icy peaks and criss-crossed by thundering rivers. Mustang has an average elevation of 4032m / 13200 ft.

The capital Lo Manthang where the present king resides, is an amazing square-walled town on the 'Plain of Prayers.'



**TREKKING WINDOW**  
MAR - MAY & OCT - DEC

## PRICE

£2490 per person\* (land only price - see last page)

\*prices subject to change





## Kingdom of Mustang Trek Itinerary

LODGE TREK  
walking times are approximate

### Day 1

#### Arrive Kathmandu

Namaste! And welcome to Kathmandu, the colourful capital of Nepal where ornately carved balconies mingle with beautiful shrines and temples. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting on arrival at the exit gate of Kathmandu airport. Our staff will welcome you with CAT's palm plate and take you to your hotel. For the rest of the day you can relax at the hotel or take a short evening walk around local markets on your own.

### Day 2

#### Free day in Kathmandu

Explore the fascinating city of Kathmandu, with its temples and markets, or take an optional excursion (can be booked locally through our Nepal office) into the Kathmandu Valley.

### Day 3

#### Fly to Pokhara.

Today we will fly to Pokhara. This is a sensational flight offering views of the Annapurna and Langtang ranges. Transfer to hotel. Rest of the day free in the delightful town of Pokhara.

### Day 4

#### Fly to Jomson 2736m and trek to Kagbeni 2896m (3.5 hours walking).

We take the spectacular early morning mountain flight up the Kali Gandaki between Dhaulagiri and the Annapurnas to Jomson. We will be met at the tiny airstrip by our sherpa crew and, after some initial preparation of loads, we begin our trek. After 3 and a half hours of flat, easy walking and directly north of Jomson, is the pretty village of Kagbeni. There are about 80 families living here, most of them traders, who are the link in the chain between modern Nepal and the mainly Tibetan people of Mustang. Just out of Jomsom we cross a small hanging bridge and then walk along the banks of the Kali Gandaki. The trail is quite barren, with craggy rocks but it is mostly flat and sandy, which makes it very easy going. This enjoyable start is extremely picturesque, with views of big peaks all around such as Dhaulagiri 8119m, Tukucho 6879m and in the west the awesome mountain of Kagbeni 6700m. Over to the south and south-west you can see the entire Annapurna Massif. Upon reaching Kagbeni there is a taste of scenes to come in Upper Mustang, with its narrow alleyways and tunnels, irrigation canals, green fields of wheat and barley and a large red gompa. The view from the roof of the gompa is particularly worth checking out. At the police check post at the north end of the village there is a sign saying, 'Restricted Area, Tourists please do not go beyond this point'. Here we present our trekking permits and enter the once forbidden area of Nepal.







## Day 5

### **Kagbeni to Chussang 2920m (5-6 hours walking).**

Depending on the flow of the river, we may trek right up the river valley or use a combination of the high trail and the riverbank pathways. The trail then widens significantly, revealing an endless stretch of sand. The path is kept interesting by the passing of mule trains bearing goods from Mustang and Tibet. On the west bank of the river you can see Gompa Kang and some caves. Unlike most monasteries in Upper Mustang, Gompa Kang is of the Nyingmapa sect. We stop for lunch at the village of Tangbe situated alongside the east bank trail above the river at an elevation of 2909m. Here we find the first black, white and red chortens which typify Upper Mustang. The little town is a labyrinth of narrow alleys amongst the whitewashed houses, fields of buckwheat, barley, wheat and apple orchards. Nilgiri Peak continues to dominate the southern skyline. Chussang village is only about 1 and a half hours walk beyond Tangbe at the confluence of the Narshang Khola and the Kali Ghandaki. There are three separate parts to this village and some broken castle walls on the surrounding cliffs. Across the river from Chussang are some spectacular eroded cliffs, like red organ pipes, above the mouth of inaccessible caves. The five villages of this area, Chele, Gyakar, Chussang, Tangbe and Tetang are a culturally unified group of people, closely related to the Manangis rather than the true Lobas.

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## Day 6

### **Chussang to Samar 3500m (5-6 hours walking).**

There is a distinct change here, not only in topography, but also in culture, lifestyle and people. Settlements are more scattered, smaller and basic. The people of Lo or Mustang do practice agriculture but, because of the lack of rain or fertile soil, cultivation is in sheltered plots of land making the landscape a pattern of brown, with scattered greens. Continuing north, either wading the river or climbing on the trail, we reach a huge red chunk of rock that has fallen from the cliffs above forming a tunnel through which the river flows. A steel bridge spans the river just in front of the tunnel. North of here the Kali Gandaki becomes impassable on foot, although locals sometimes travel this route on horseback through a steep, narrow canyon. There are many caves here, high on the fluted red cliffs above. The trek now leaves the valley and climbs steeply up a rocky gully to the village of Chele 3012m which sits amongst extensive barley fields that blanket the hillside. Most of the houses now have sheep horns above their doorways as ghost traps. Watch out for the Tibetan mastiffs kept by some of the families. Climbing from Chele up a steep spur we come to a cairn at 3112m where there is a view of the village of Gyagar across the huge canyon. The climb continues along the side of a spectacular steep canyon to a pass at 3484m. From there, it descends on a pleasant trail to Samar situated in a grove of poplar trees. This is a major stopping place for horse and mule caravans.



## Day 7

### **Samar to Ghiling 3500m (4-5 hours walking).**

We climb above Samar to a ridge and then descend into a large gorge past a chorten painted in red, black, yellow and white where the trail goes into another valley filled with juniper trees. We then cross the stream to climb to a ridge at 3787m, cross another pass, follow a ridge and descend to Syang Mochen, a tiny settlement with a few tea shops at 3687m. A local person can show you the steep trail to Rangbyung, a cave with statues that 'grow'. It is believed that if any part of the statue is broken off it will grow back by itself. The trail climbs gently from Shyang Mochen to a pass at 3748m and enters another huge east-west valley. There is a trail junction here; the left trail is the direct route to Nyi La, by passing Ghiling. We take the right fork and descend to Ghiling with its extensive fields of barley at 3578m. As in all settlements of Mustang, most houses are constructed out of mud and stones with roofs made from twigs, straw and a mixture of mud and pebbles, usually painted in bright white or ochre colours.

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## Day 8

### **Ghiling to Ghami 3551m (6-7 hours walking).**

From Ghiling the trail climbs gently through fields, up the centre of the valley, passing below the settlement of Tama Gun and an imposing chorten. It rejoins the direct trail and then becomes an unrelenting climb across the head of the valley to Nyi La Pass 3950m. This pass is the southern boundary of Lo or Mustang itself. The descent from Nyi La is nice and gentle. About half an hour from the pass is a trail junction; the right trail is the direct route to Charang, the left trail leads to Ghami. Ghami is a small village sheltered by overhanging cliffs and next to a clear stream. During the day you will pass many chortens along the way; please adopt the local customs by always keeping to the left of chortens.







## Day 9

### **Ghami to Charang 3560m (5 - 6 hours walking).**

Today's walk is through perhaps the driest part of Mustang and much of one's energy is spent negotiating loose, dry soil. However, the contrast between the gentle contours of the north and the rugged mountains in the east and west are inspirational. Our day ends in Charang, a large spread-out village, inhabited totally by Lobas. Charang is a maze of trees, willow fields and houses separated by stone walls, at the top of the large Charang Chu canyon. The huge five-storey monastery fortress is perched on the edge of the Kali Gandaki gorge to the east end of the village. The gompa houses an excellent collection of statues and Thangkas.

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## Day 10

### **Charang to Lo Manthang 3770m (5-6 hours walking).**

We will spend part of the morning exploring the village and its large old monastery before setting out for Lo Manthang. On the way we will go a bit off the route to see Dhakmar, a small, secluded village. We climb gently above the valley to a large isolated chorten that marks the boundary between Charang and Lo. The trail becomes a grand, wide thoroughfare and eventually we get our first view of the walled city of Lo Manthang from a ridge at 3850m. A short descent leads onto the 'Plain of Aspiration'. The only entrance to the city is on the northeast corner, so we walk around the wall to the gate, where you are sure to find a group of people spinning wool and gossiping.





## Day 11

### Rest day in Lo Manthang.

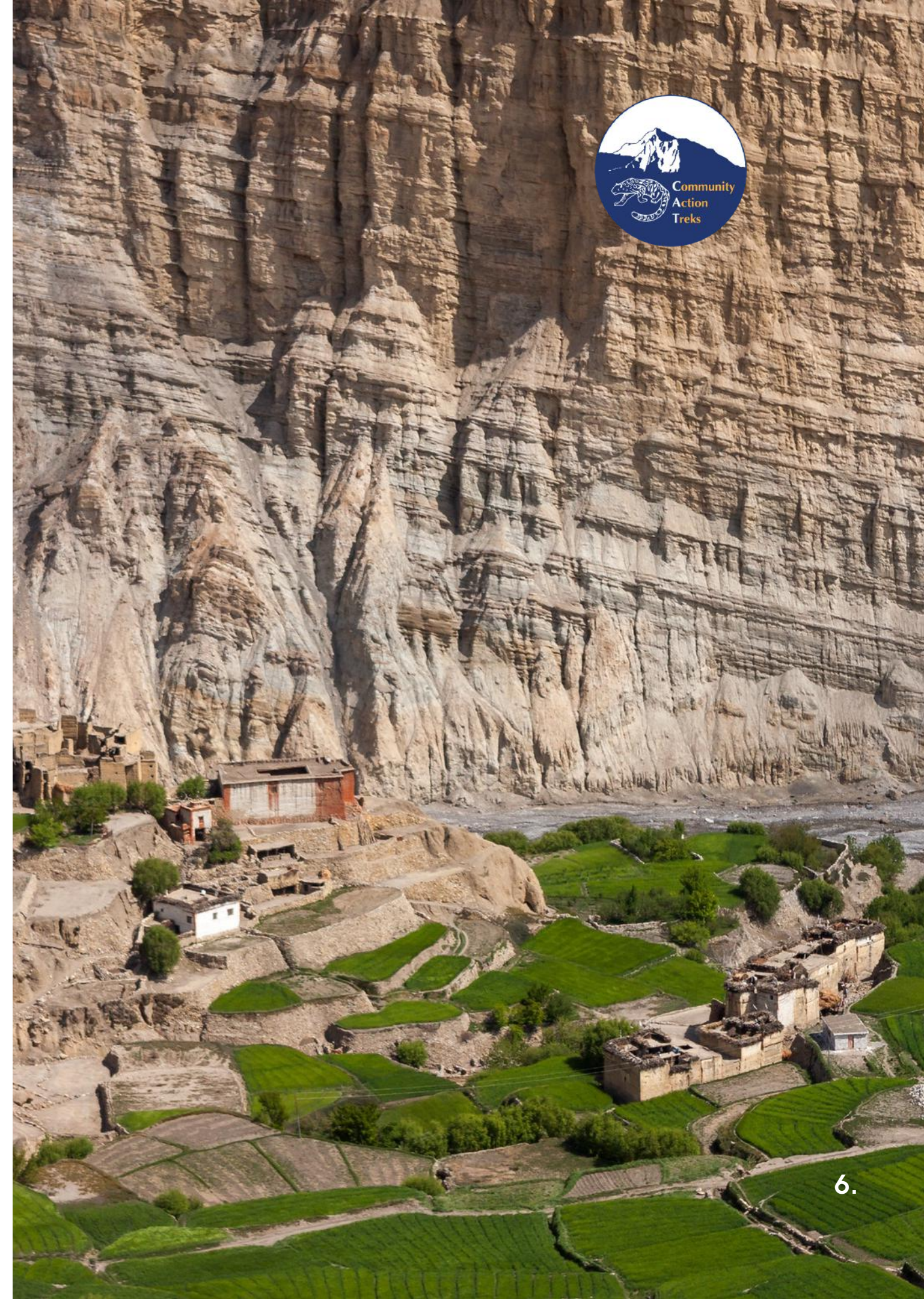
This fascinating city contains about 150 houses, plus many cells for lamas. Some of the houses adjoin the city walls, and it is quite delightful to lose yourself in this walled city exploring its network of narrow streets. There are four major temples within the city and there is a caretaker and key available at certain times. The temples are very impressive, with huge clay statues of various buddhas. The King's Palace is an imposing four-storey building in the centre of the city and is occupied by the current king and queen. The king is an active horseman and keeps a stable of the best horses in Mustang; he also breeds Lhasa Apso dogs and has several monstrous Tibetan Mastiffs. Although his duties are largely ceremonial, he is respected by the people and consulted on many issues by villagers throughout the kingdom.

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## Day 12

### Lo Manthang.

Depending on the availability of a special permit by the time this trek is due to start from Kathmandu (which is not always possible), we will make a day journey to Chossar and possibly Njejhung. There are two valleys above Lo Manthang. In the western valley is the site of the king's summer palace at Tingkar, as well as the monastery of Namgyal (the monastery of victory) situated in a spectacular setting on top of a desolate ridge. The other valley contains Chossar, the site of the high school and two other monasteries. This is the main trading route to Tibet and described by Tucci as 'used over the centuries by pilgrims and apostles, robbers and invaders.' Return to Lo Manthang by late evening. It may be possible to hire horses for the day.







## Day 13

### **Lo Manthang to Lo Gyakar (4-5 hours walking).**

We will start our return journey from Lo Manthang, taking the upper high land route which offers dramatic views of the Lo Manthang and Tsarang Valley, with snow clad peaks in the background.

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## Day 14

### **Lo Gyakar to Ghami 3551m (5-6 hours walking).**

Continuing the journey, we trek through the high land route of upper Mustang toward Dhakmar for lunch. After lunch we rejoin the trail to Ghami – Ghiling, the route at Ghami village itself.

## Day 15

### **Ghami to Chussang 2920m (5.5 hours walking).**

Return by the same route to Chussang village for our overnight stay.

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## Day 16

### **Chussang to Jomsom 2736m (6-7 hours walking).**

It is a long day returning by the same trail to Jomson where we end our trek and you can enjoy a welcome hot shower. This evening there will be a celebration with your sherpas and porters who have trekked with you.





## Day 17

### Fly to Pokhara.

We fly from Jomsom to Pokhara. The bazaars and waterfront cafes, along with the warm climate, make it an excellent place to relax after your trek.

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## Day 18

### Fly to Kathmandu.

Fly from Pokhara to Kathmandu, where we return to our group hotel. You have the rest of the day free.

## Day 19

### Free day in Kathmandu.

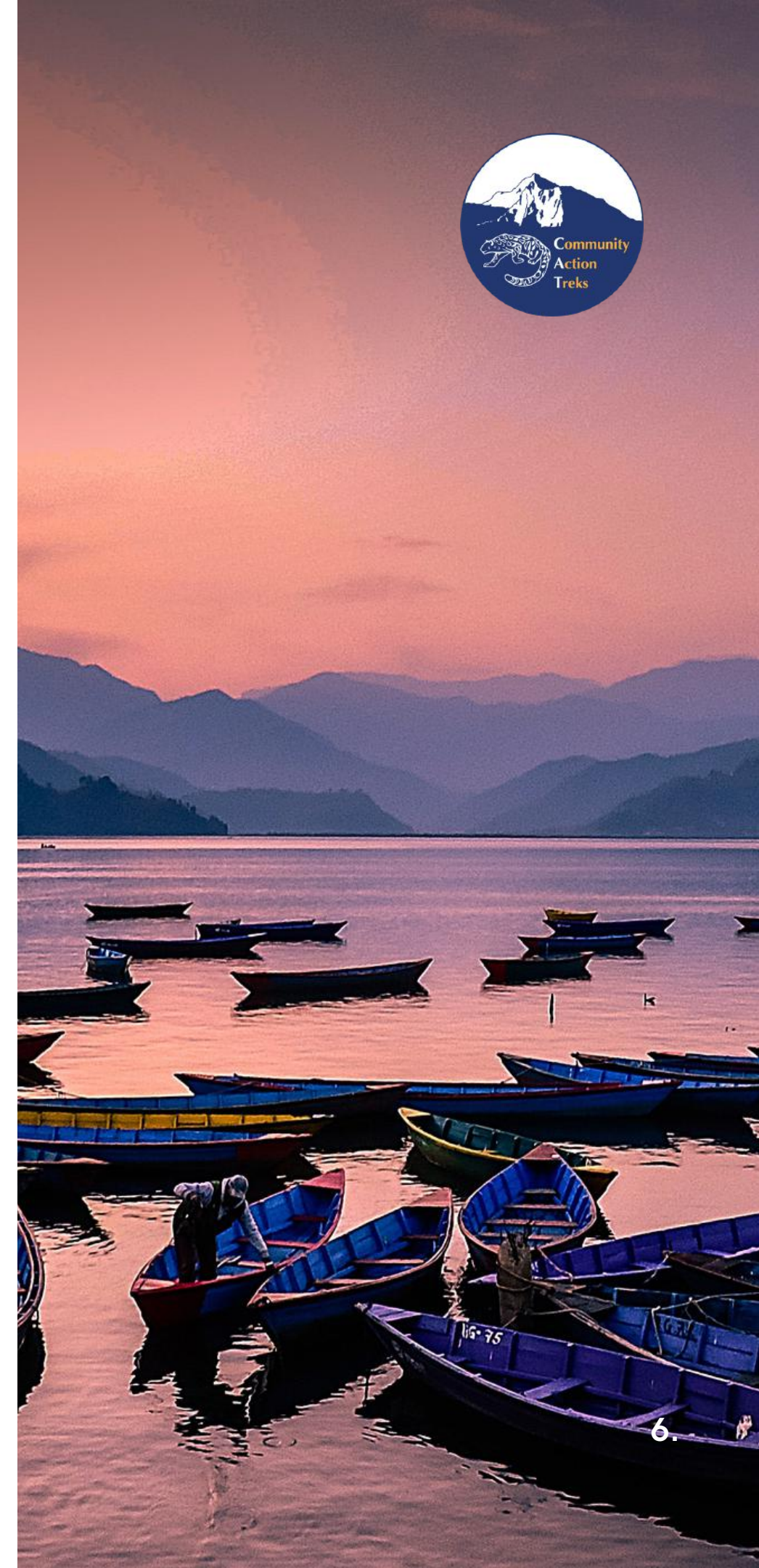
Today you have time to shop for crafts or explore the city. Kathmandu is a great place to buy presents! Half day or full day sight-seeing trips can also be arranged to Patan or Bhaktapur, the other two historical cities in the Kathmandu Valley through our Kathmandu office.

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## Day 20

### Depart Nepal.

Transfer to Kathmandu airport.







#### The price includes (on a lodge basis):

- Transfers between Kathmandu airport and hotel accommodation
- Journeys (by air) between Kathmandu-Pokhara-Jomsom, Jomsom-Pokhara-Kathmandu including departure taxes for internal flights, where applicable.
- Accommodation for 4 nights in Kathmandu and 2 nights in Pokhara in rooms on sharing basis (single supplement extra) with shower and WC and inclusive of breakfast, as per itinerary.
- Three meals a day (open Lodge menus) and accommodation (sharing basis) during the trek.
- Participation in the trek as per itinerary inclusive of full board
- Services of local porters (15 kg load per participant), Sirdar (head guide) and assistant guide (depending on group size)
- All Nepalese staff insurance as per Government regulations
- All trekking permits.

#### Not included:

- International flights
- Nepalese visa - (please refer to our document "Preparing for your trek: Nepal" for latest prices).
- Meals other than breakfast in Kathmandu.
- Travel insurance.
- Tips.
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls and souvenirs (allow approximately £250 spending money).

#### Land only prices

The cost of international flights, in particular those to Nepal, are less predictable than they used to be. Airlines now request full payment upfront. As a result, we will quote you a land-only cost.

#### Options

Extra nights are available in Kathmandu in our group hotel, and in Pokhara in our choice of accommodation. Extension packages can also be organised in Nepal, Tibet or Bhutan.

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# Contact us

for more information about any of our treks, please contact us and speak to our professional travel guides using the information below:

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#### Important Note

Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions.